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**The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism. Jarl E. Fossum**

Culianu, Ioan Petru

*Published in:*  
History of Religions

*DOI:*  
[10.1086/463093](https://doi.org/10.1086/463093)

**IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.**

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Publication date:*  
1987

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Culianu, I. P. (1987). The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism. Jarl E. Fossum. *History of Religions*, 26(4), 435-436.  
<https://doi.org/10.1086/463093>

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Review

Reviewed Work(s): The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism by Jarl E. Fossum

Review by: Ioan Petru Culianu

Source: *History of Religions*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (May, 1987), pp. 435-436

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1062182>

Accessed: 30-10-2018 10:47 UTC

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arts on the one hand, for instance, and the summary reduction of Taranis, Esus, Sucellos, and others to Celtic Dis Pater figures on the other. More serious, perhaps, is insufficient recognition that, in the mass of Irish testimony to the relationship between the rulership and the land, between the king and sovereignty goddess, both human morality and the feminine divinity are active forces. The failure of a king to rule justly, more than any physical blemish or defeat, occasions the return of the divinity as goddess of death. Here the feminine principle plays a more determining role than in Sterckx's reductionist paradigm, while man is not simply condemned to reflect the inadequacies of divine prototypes. [WILLIAM SAYERS, *Council of Ontario Universities*]

*The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origins of Gnosticism.* By JARL E. FOSSUM. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, vol. 36. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1985. Pp. 378.

This is one of the most important books on Gnosticism to appear after the complete publication of the Nag Hammadi texts. The author searches for the origin of the Gnostic demiurge in the Samaritan (and Jewish) traditions, among which the sect of Dositheus, and especially its antinomian splinter groups, play a crucial role (pp. 45–75, esp. 64 ff.).

A thorough investigation leads the author to establish a set of representations that seem to derive, historically and logically, from one another, thus forming a continuous series that would eventually bring about the Gnostic demiurge as a lesser, mainly negative, creator of this world. According to Fossum, the whole process commences when the Word of God is transformed in a hypostasis: the Angel-Word (pp. 86 ff.). There is enough evidence, from (Hellenized) Judaism, Samaritanism, and from Simon the Magician of Samaria and his successors, whom the author proposes to call "protognostics," that the creation of the actual world is attributed to an angel of the Lord. This angel is by no means an evildoer (pp. 192 ff.). Even the "protognostics" would not consider him as such. They would only stress the fact that this angel, who is identified as being the God of the Jews, could not be God Himself (pp. 216 ff.). The idea that the same angel was also the creator (or, actually, one of the creators) of the human body was widespread "at a time when the borderlines between the various divisions within the wider phenomenon of Judaism were vague. While Gen. 1.26 could be taken to imply that the body of man was the production of (certain) angels, Gen. 2.7 lent itself to the view that Adam's body was produced by the principal angel, the Angel of YHWH" (p. 237).

Several other sets of Samaritan beliefs, such as the magic power of the Name of God and the qualities bestowed upon prophets by the endowment with God's Name, are presented by the author as a sequel to the Word hypostasis. Simon would actively use these Samaritan traditions (pp. 112 ff.). The whole sequence would thus be: Word, Name, Angel of the Lord, being a hypostasis of both Word and Name. The prophet as "bearer of the Name" is a distinct

character. Simon Magus would claim to being such a prophet, “God’s agent sent for the salvation of mankind. His appearance was necessary because the angels who had created the world subsequently had turned against God and brought the world to the brink of destruction through their bad government” (p. 337).

The materials discussed in this book are extremely rich. Statements are put forward very cautiously, which is a sign of cleverness, but which might present a difficult exercise for less experienced readers. [IOAN PETRU CULIANU, *University of Groningen*]

*Ayodhyā. Pt. 1: The History of Ayodhyā from the 7th century B.C. to the Middle of the 18th Century. Pt. 2: Ayodhyāmāhātmya: Introduction, Edition, and Annotation. Pt. 3: Appendices, Concordances, Bibliography, Indexes, and Maps.* By HANS BAKKER. Groningen Oriental Series, vol. 1. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1986. Pp. 181; 471; 119, 4 maps.

This is a fine piece of scholarship, containing a historicoreligious description of the pilgrimage center of Ayodhyā and an edition of the *Ayodhyāmāhātmya* according to ten manuscripts (of which four are newly discovered), with commentaries, indexes, an impressive bibliography, and accurate maps.

Ancient Sanskrit epics describe the mythical town of Ayodhyā, but they never mention Sāketa, which was, from the sixth century B.C. on, an important center of northern India, known by geographers and tradesmen. Moreover, Sāketa happened to be situated on the same spot as the actual Ayodhyā, at least as early as the sixth century, when the royal court of the Guptas moved there. This implies that at some time an identification took place between Ayodhyā, seat of Prince Rāma, and the town of Sāketa. Rāmaite temples were installed in Ayodhyā from the twelfth century on. The cult of (the name of) Rāma grew there between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries. A Rāmaite theology was elaborated along orthodox vedantic lines in the fifteenth century.

The process by which, in the sixteenth century, Ayodhyā developed into a sacred city is very curious. First of all, newly discovered ancient holy sites are identified by pious Hinduists as being the place where Rāma used to brush his teeth or where he created a pleasure grove for Sītā (pt. 1, p. 136). By the same time Ayodhyā had become a flourishing pilgrimage center. To Rāma devotees several actual sites could be shown whose names were borrowed from those of sites of the mythical town. “Once a start was made with the rediscovery of the ancient places of the Tretāyuga this paradigm could in principle be employed without limit, and the present situation in Ayodhyā bears witness to its prolificacy. The rediscovery was guided by the conception of a celestial city of Ayodhyā that is forever established in Viṣṇu’s heaven, and of which the terrestrial town is thought to be a replica. . . . The rediscovery of the ancient places of the Tretāyuga had not only become a means of recovering the glorious past, but simultaneously provided devotees with a true reflection of the eternal paradise of Rāma” (pt. 1, pp. 143–44).